

# Applicant Interview Questions

In the interview process, all participants must be aware of questions which violate legal protections afforded applicants by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other legislation which followed. The following list is intended to guide those involved in the hiring processes of UT Extension in conducting legally sound applicant interviews. Questions regarding this list should be addressed to Shirley Hastings at [hastings@utk.edu](mailto:hastings@utk.edu) or 865-974-7245.

Interview Topic	Acceptable Questions	Unacceptable Questions
Age	Are you at least 18 years old?	How old are you? What is your date of birth? <i>(Any questions which would divulge or help determine the age of the applicant.)</i>
Birthplace	None	Where were you born? Where were your parents born? <i>(We cannot require a birth certificate.)</i>
Character and Criminal Background	Have you ever been convicted of a felony/crime? <i>(You must state that convictions do not necessarily disqualify an applicant from consideration– to be considered only as it relates to fitness to perform the job being sought.)</i>	Have you ever been arrested? Have you ever been indicted for a crime? Do you have any debts? Do you have any loans? Are you a militant?
Citizenship	Can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the U.S.?	Are you a U.S. Citizen? Where were you born?

Interview Topic	Acceptable Questions	Unacceptable Questions
Disability	<p>Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation?</p> <p>Do you know of any reason you cannot perform the essential functions of the job?</p> <p>Can you perform all job functions, not just those essential to the job? <i>( an applicant cannot be screened out just because of their inability to perform marginal job functions.)</i></p> <p>Discuss regular work hours, leave policies, absence policy and special attendance standards – Can these work-attendance requirements be met?</p> <p>Describe how you would perform these essential job functions.</p>	<p>Are you disabled?</p> <p>How long have you had a disability?</p> <p>Do you have a speech, hearing, visual disability?</p> <p>What is the nature or severity of any disability you may have?</p> <p>What is the condition which caused your disability?</p> <p>What is the prognosis or expectation regarding your disability?</p> <p>Will you need treatment or special leave because of your disability?</p>
Education	<p>What is your educational background?</p>	<p>When did you graduate from high school?</p> <p>When did you receive your college degree?</p>
Experience	<p>What is your previous work experience?</p> <p>Have you ever served in any of the U.S. military services?</p>	<p>What type of discharge did you receive from the military?</p>
Family Status	<p>Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the job attendance or travel requirements?</p> <p><i>(If asked, must be asked of all applicants.)</i></p>	<p>Do you have any family members who are disabled?</p> <p>Are you married?</p> <p>What is your spouse's name?</p> <p>Who resides with you?</p> <p>Are you pregnant?</p> <p>How many children do you have?</p> <p>Ages of children?</p> <p>What kind of child-care arrangements do you have?</p> <p>Does your husband expect you to be home to cook dinner?</p> <p>What will you do if your children get sick?</p> <p>Does your husband live with you or contribute to your support?</p> <p>Do you plan to get married?</p> <p>Do you plan to have children?</p> <p>What sort of birth control do you use?</p> <p>Are you likely to quit if you get married or have children?</p> <p>Is your spouse likely to be transferred?</p> <p>Is your spouse from this area?</p> <p>Have you ever been divorced?</p>

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Name	Have you ever worked for extension or the federal government under any other name?	If female, what is your maiden name?
National Origin	Are you able to read, write or speak any other languages and what is the fluency of your ability?	Were you born in this country? That's an unusual name--what nationality are you? When did you first come to the U.S? What is your mother tongue? What is the nationality of your parents/spouse?
Photograph	Not Acceptable.	No photographs should be required or taken at the interview stage.
Physical Condition	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation? Do you know of any reason you cannot perform the essential functions of the job?	Have you ever been treated for any of the following diseases (followed by a list of numerous diseases/illnesses)? Do you wear contact lenses? Please list any diseases for which you have been treated within the last two years? Have you been identified as a carrier of a disease producing gene? Have you been hospitalized? If so, for what condition? Are you on any regular medication or prescribed drugs? Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist? If so, for what condition? Have you ever been treated for any addictions? Have you filed for or collected workers' compensation benefits? Do you have any physical or mental limitations which would prevent you from satisfactorily performing the job for which you are applying? How many sick days did you take last year? Are you healthy? Have you ever had a worker's compensation claim?

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Race and Sex	None.	Are you male or female? If your supervisor is white (or black), does that create any difficulties for you? How do you feel about having to work with members of a different race? Do you get along well with other women (or men)? Will it bother you if the men swear? Can you work for a woman supervisor?
Relatives	Please name any relatives who work for our organization.	Are you married? What relatives live with you? With whom do you reside?
Religion	None <i>(You may ask about the availability for weekend work.)</i>	What is your religion? What church do you attend? What are your religious holidays?
Residence	What is your address?	Do you own a home? Do you own or rent a home? Who resides with you?
Transportation	Do you know of any reason (for example, transportation, or any other reason) why you would not be able to get to work on time and on a regular basis?	How do you get to work? Do you own a car?
Work Schedule	Can you meet the attendance requirements of the position being applied for?	Do you have any health conditions which would lead to absences from work?

# OTHER PERMISSIBLE QUESTIONS

## Diversity

What do you do to tolerate people different from you?  
What qualities do you bring to this job others might not?

## Experience / Job Skills

What has been your greatest accomplishment in a work environment?  
Describe a project that required a high amount of energy over an extended period of time.  
What would your previous two supervisors say about you?  
Tell me about a time when your performance didn't live up to your own expectations.  
What is your greatest skill for handling a crisis?  
Tell me something you've learned from making a mistake on the job.  
Tell me about a responsibility you have enjoyed.  
Why do you believe you are qualified for the job?  
What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?  
Why did you leave your last position?  
When were you last responsible for doing this kind of work?  
How much do you know about us?  
Why did you decide to handle the situation that way?  
What skills do you think you bring to this job?  
What steps do you generally follow in making a decision?  
What types of criticism are leveled at you most often?  
Tell me about your job. To whom do you report? How many other employees report to this supervisor and what are their job titles?  
What do you like most about your current job? What do you like least?  
What were your two most important achievements in your current job?  
What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?  
What are the areas in which you could improve? How would you go about making these improvements?  
If I were to ask your supervisor to describe your work what would he/she say?  
What are some of the problems you encountered in your last job? Were you ever subjected to disciplinary action in your last job?  
How does your present job differ from the one you had before it?  
In what ways do you feel your present job has prepared you to assume additional responsibilities?  
Why do you want to leave your present position?  
Describe your activities during a typical day on the job?  
What makes you an effective supervisor?  
What is the greatest accomplishment of your career to date?  
What do you feel an employer owes an employee?  
What were some of the duties of your last job that you found to be difficult?

## Goal Setting / Initiative

What do you do when things are slow at work?  
What do you put at the bottom of your "to-do" list?  
Where do you see yourself a year from now? In three years? Five years? Ten years?  
Tell me about a time when you took initiative to accomplish something that would not have been done otherwise.  
How might your skills be improved?  
What goals did you set for yourself in your last position?  
How do you plan and organize your work?  
What plans do you have for self-development in the next 12 months?  
Where do you see yourself in five years?  
What are your career objectives?  
Who or what influenced you with regard to your career goals? In what way?  
What are you looking for in a company?  
What immediate and long term career goals have you set for yourself?  
How do you feel about the progress that you have made in your career to date?

## Interpersonal Relations

What kind of people do you get along with best?

How do you delegate work to others?

Tell me about a time when you disagreed with the point of view of a coworker. How did you handle it?

How about a time when you disagreed with your boss? How did you handle it?

Many of us improve our personal interaction with others as we mature. Looking back over the past two years, in what way have you improved?

What kind of people do you find it difficult/easy to work with? Why?

Describe a situation at your last job involving pressure? How did you handle it?

## Motivation

What motivates you?

What are some of the basic factors that motivate and excite you at work?

What kind of reward and recognition programs are most satisfying for you?

Who and what has motivated you in the past?

What aspects of your employment give you the greatest satisfaction?

Of all the jobs you have had which do you find the most/least rewarding?

What motivates you best? Why?

What did you like most/least about your last job?

What is your description of the ideal work environment?

## Personal Traits

How would co-workers describe you?

What makes a job enjoyable for you?

What do you consider important in a job?

Describe a time when you were involved in implementing a change that affected others. How were you able to encourage others to adapt to the change?

What does service mean to you?

What would your last boss tell a friend about you?

Do you foresee any reasons that you would not be able to travel for business reasons?

Do you intend to stay in the area?

Are you willing to relocate to this or any other area?

What did you learn from each of your previous jobs?

We are looking for employees with commitment to this position. Are there any reasons why you might not stay with us?

What would you like to avoid in future jobs?

What are your salary requirements?

## Supervision

What are your favorite kinds of bosses?

Describe some of the supervisors you most admire.

What are the biggest problems you've had with bosses?

What kind of direction do you prefer to be given— very specific, where your manager helps set your goals and regularly follows up with you to check on progress, or one in which your manager just tells you what needs to be done and lets you go about accomplishing your goal as you see fit? Why?

How do you think your subordinates would describe you as a manager and supervisor?

What attributes do you believe an effective manager should possess?

What is your description of the ideal manager? Subordinate? Co-workers?

## Teamwork

Give me an example of a time when you succeeded individually/as a part of a team.

Tell me which role you would like to play in a group— the team leader or the team member and why?

How were you able to demonstrate teamwork in your last position?